



2001 Wetlands Reserve Program

A Kentucky Success —

A family in Fulton County had farmed in the “bend” for years, losing crops or just breaking even more often than making a profit. “The land was either wet or dry, depending on the level of the Mississippi River”, said one family member. “Enrolling the land into WRP was the only way to keep the land in the family, literally.”

The Farm Credit Bank notified NRCS that foreclosure proceedings on the farm were in progress and would be completed within 60 days unless the easement could be closed and allow the landowner to satisfy the loan. NRCS moved quickly to complete the acquisition process.

This easement was successfully closed in April of 2001, averting the loss of the family farm to foreclosure. The Farm Credit Bank was also relieved to be able to avoid a farm foreclosure.

As a result, other neighbors are interested in enrolling their land into the program.



Kentucky Summary

Overview

The Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) is a voluntary program that provides technical and financial assistance to eligible landowners to restore, enhance and protect wetlands. Kentucky WRP has helped many farmers remove unprofitable, environmentally sensitive land from crop protection. Compensation for the conservation easement allows the landowner to pursue other, more profitable ventures. Many of the easements are along the Ohio and Mississippi rivers in the center of the Mississippi flyway. These projects provide tremendous economic opportunities to the landowner for the establishment of duck hunting clubs.

Kentucky's WRP objectives are to restore bottomland hardwood forest and enroll more land in middle and east Kentucky. The majority of lands enrolled in Kentucky are in the western counties. WRP provides NRCS opportunities to establish native hardwood trees such as red and white oaks, hickory, walnut, and cypress comprising the remaining Kentucky forested wetlands.

Accomplishments

From 1995 and through 2001, 8,200 acres were enrolled. This represents 52 landowners receiving easement payments totaling over \$6 million. Nearly one million dollars will be spent locally to restore wildlife habitat on the easements. Eight easements on 1,212 acres were acquired from eight landowners in FY-2001 at a cost of \$1,425,000.

Eighty percent of landowners have opted to enroll their land under a permanent WRP easement. The other twenty percent have elected 30-year easements and receive a 25 percent reduction in the easement and restoration payments. Only four landowners have elected to receive cost-share-only restoration funds on 104 acres. Restoration work has been completed on over half of the acres enrolled in WRP with significant restoration work scheduled to be completed in 2002.

With little advertising, Kentucky has pending applications on file from 40 landowners requesting nearly \$5 million to enroll over 4,500 acres into WRP.

Program Benefits

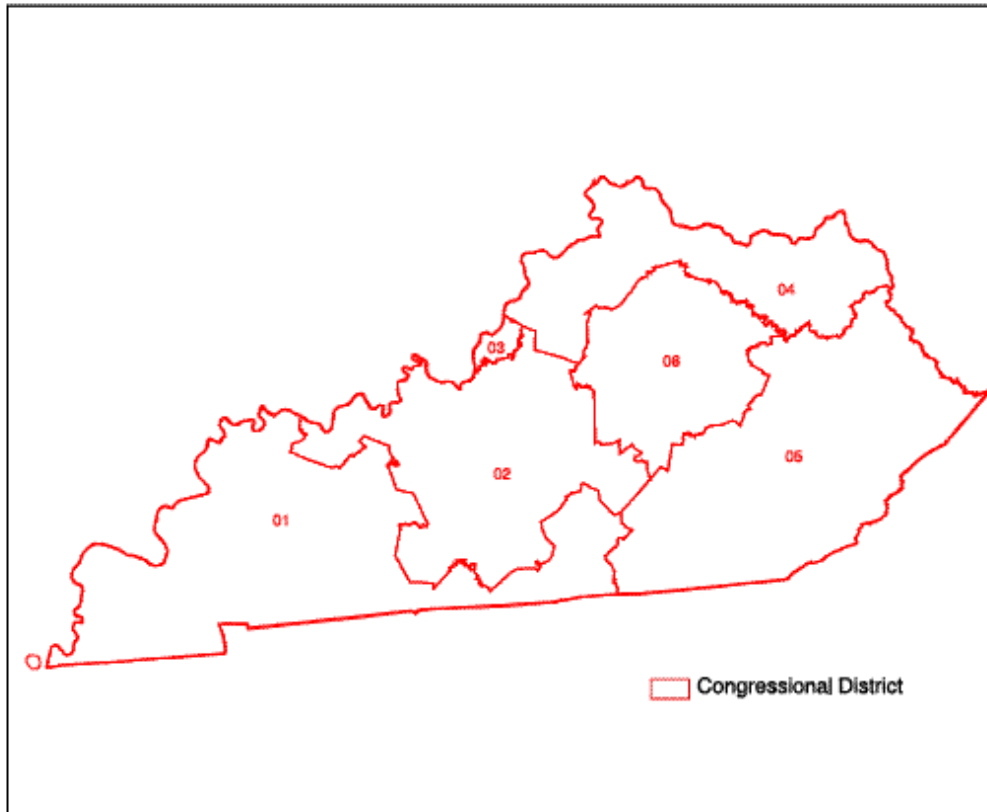
The WRP provides significant financial support for wetland restoration and enhancement. It has provided critical migratory bird habitat as well as habitat for the endangered copper-belly water snake. The program provides land use alternatives to Kentucky landowners with flood-prone agricultural tracts and provides alternative income sources from hunting activities. Landowners can “cash-out” their farm equity to pursue other economic ventures while keeping the land in the family.

State contacts

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Kentucky Dollars and Contracts by Congressional District



Kentucky Dollars and Contracts ^{1/}

Congressional Districts	Fiscal Year 2001		Cumulative Total (95-01)	
	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts	Obligated Dollars	Number of Contracts
District 1	\$1,424,507	8	\$6,779,687	49
District 2	\$0	0	\$429,313	3
District 3	\$0	0	\$0	0
District 4	\$0	0	\$0	0
District 5	\$0	0	\$0	0
District 6	\$0	0	\$0	0
State Totals	\$1,424,507	8	\$7,209,000	52

^{1/} Does not include cost-share only restoration agreements

Source: Kentucky NRCS, data through 4th quarter FY 2001.

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